

## October Chills by orphan\_account

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**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Nancy Wheeler, Scott Clarke, Steve Harrington, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Maxine "Max" Mayfield/Lucas Sinclair, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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**Summary:**

it's truly unsettling to feel something that isn't actually there

# 1. Flamethrowers and Front Porches

## Author's Note:

Hello my wonderful spooky darlings, i'm back to writing stranger things fanfiction for the halloween season, i hope you enjoy this first chapter of October Chills (inspired by the fact its getting cold again and i'm getting serious season 2 nostalgia)

If you enjoy this please leave kudos and a comment, i'd love to know if you guys are interested in this story's concept

also there may be Byler in later chapters, but for now its going to focus on how Will's PTSD has manifested itself

When the brain expects pain, sometimes a person might feel hurt even when there is nothing hurting them; an extended period of this psychological pain can end up affecting a person more than if they were physically injured. Sometimes the feeling may not be painful, if you were afraid of spiders, you might feel a tickling up your arms or legs that could make you think a spider was crawling on your body. Whatever the sensation, these psychological feelings can create a severe sense of paranoia in a person, it's truly unsettling to feel something that isn't actually there.

For Will Byers, drastic 'changes' in his internal body heat were the cause of the psychological expectation that he was either being burned by industrial flame-throwers or being frozen by the Mindflayer's possession. The anticipation of these extreme sensations kept him awake at ungodly hours, silently crying as terror overcame him. It wasn't uncommon to find Will bundled up in clothes one day, only to find him taking hour long, icy cold showers; nothing seemed to make sense in his life anymore. Though these 'heat episodes' were uncommon, as the creeping, cold fog of Fall began to descend upon Hawkins, and the anniversary of both his initial disappearance, and his subsequent possession, inched relentlessly closer, the 'heat episodes' increased with worsening effects.

When Will suffered 'heat episodes' in the summer, they were easier to deal with, and whilst he might've gotten a slight shiver from the lengthy freezing showers, his body didn't find the cold temperature too difficult to react to, outside it was unbearably hot so the chill of the shower actually helped him cool down. The heat also meant that when he felt internally frozen, spending a few hours sunbathing could warm him up sufficiently (even if it meant he had a permanent smattering of freckles and sunburnt tips of his ears); overall, the summer wasn't too bad.

Now Fall was falling, Will couldn't stay healthy in his coping techniques. After a particularly bad nightmare, in which he had been tied to the bed in Hopper's cabin, surrounded by roaring, inescapable flamethrowers, Will couldn't shake off the feeling that his insides were boiling, even as his dream-terror had awoken him into a fit of panting, he knew what he had to do. It was mid-October, leaves were becoming fiery orange and the morning mist left the dewy grass frosty and crunchy underfoot; safe to say, it was too cold for Will to be taking a long shower at the lowest temperature the dial could achieve. Will knew this, for all the things he was, stupid was not one of them. He tried to chill himself sufficiently by going out onto the front porch in nothing but shorts and a vest, but it simply wasn't cold enough (which Will rationally knew was preposterous as he was physically shivering), like an addict, Will craved the coldness of his bathroom, how if he left the shower running long enough, his breaths would create little clouds in the early morning light.

Will sighed, he knew he was going to get really sick sooner or later if his 'heat episodes' kept getting worse, but right then, he knew he would go crazy if he couldn't take that shower.

The water was so cold that it burned him, though nowhere nearly as badly as the agony his ever-burning insides caused him, he sat in the bath, letting the increasingly freezing water cascade over him; it was colder than usual as the pipes that delivered water to the Byers house were all external, and therefore had frosted over in the outside chill. Once he had adjusted to the excruciatingly cold water, Will focussed on steadying his breathing, which had been erratic since he awoke. Though in reality, his whole body was chilling to an alarmingly low temperature, Will could only just feel his blood begin to cool, starting

at his head and creeping down through his veins. He couldn't shake the concept that his body was just a tiny version of the Demo-dog's tunnels under Hawkins. It made him shiver, though realistically that was probably his body telling him to get the hell out of the shower and warm up; Will ignored it, he had barely been under the cold water for fifteen minutes.

Will was afraid of his symptoms becoming worse, he would surely die by November if he kept needing the cold so desperately; a dark place in his mind told him that was for the best, at least then he wouldn't have to tell anyone about how he wasn't better at all.

It was easier to live in a façade now he'd been doing it for so long, he saw how everyone was becoming happier now the evil of the Upside Down and Hawkins' lab were seemingly gone, the world wasn't ending, so why would they all worry that it would try and end again? He could certainly not tell his mom; any more stress would kill her, and it would be all his fault. Life for all of those around him was better off as he kept his 'heat episodes' to himself, and if it did kill him, well, at least he got to live a few years longer than he thought he would whilst trapped in the Upside Down.

After Will had shaken himself out of his mental spiral, he realised with some relief and some fear, that he was positively frozen; though comfortingly, this version of frozen was not akin to that of the Mindflayer's hand. With a shaky hand, Will shut the water off and slowly began to get up; his joints were so cold that it was difficult to move at all.

It took him about five minutes until he was stood on the bathmat with a coarse, striped towel wrapped around his scrawny frame; his level of shivering had increased ten-fold, and aside from the lack of burning inside, Will felt much worse than he had when he'd awoken. This was not usual, Will felt like if he didn't warm up soon, he'd probably pass out, despite his protesting muscles, and legs so shaky he was unstable, he managed to stumble his way to his bedroom.

Once buried under the covers of his duvet and several thick blankets (he kept them stored underneath his bed in anticipation for just such occasions), Will felt still far too cold. He wondered how long he'd been under the shower to cause him to feel physically frozen. He

peeped his head from under the blankets long enough to see the little green digits of his alarm clock. From vague memory, it had been around half past four when terror had pulled him from his unpleasant slumber, now the clock read six fifty-four; Will froze, no wonder he could barely feel his body, he'd spaced out under the shower for over an hour. In six minutes, Jonathan's alarm would blare out and Will would be expected to wake up and get ready for school.

Panic set in, he couldn't feign illness, or his mom would take his temperature and believe he was possessed again because he was so cold. He decided he'd just have to try and live the day, even if he felt like he was about to die.

As predicted, six minutes later, the wake-up alarm blared and startled Will a little, even though he knew it was coming, sudden noises never failed to make him jump anymore. Will heard Jonathan groan to life and smash the button on his alarm, he knew the inevitable could be resisted no longer as padded footsteps came closer, and a quiet knock at his bedroom door, intended to wake him up without a fright, was followed by his older brother's gentle, morning voice, called out for Will to wake up. Will was thankful that no one barged into his room anymore, at least he didn't have to explain his current cocoon state.

To make sure Jonathan absolutely didn't enter his room, Will gave a meagre reply, trying to make his voice sound remotely normal. Jonathan seemed satisfied with the response, and Will to get ready for the day ahead. Since Joyce worked full-time shifts and had to be out of the door at seven thirty on the dot, Jonathan was left to make breakfast and ensure Will got to school safely and on-time; in a normal family, that's what the other parent would do, but Will was quite aware that their family was not a normal family. Considering how much of a rush his mom was usually in on Monday mornings, Will hoped that she would overlook any external symptoms the cold water may have given him.

Not wanting to take any chances, Will left the wonderful warmth of his bedding and checked his overall appearance in the mirror of his wardrobe door; thankfully, aside from the blueish tint to his cheeks and the general lack of colour in his face, Will didn't look too much like a corpse left to refrigerate. He might get an 'are you alright darling?', but other than that, it would pass.

It was a relief, though Will didn't take long to relish in it, he was still stark naked and freezing, he began eyeing up which of his jumpers and jackets he could pair together to stop himself from looking overdressed, but also keeping him warm; he decided on a black, round neck jumper that had been a hand-me-down from Jonathan, it was still oversized on Will and therefore the perfect candidate. As for the coat, Will decided his usual khaki green coat should suffice, though he also decided to wear a vest and a t-shirt underneath the jumper, just in case it wouldn't warm him up enough.

He pulled on the outfit and paired it with his usual pair of blue-denim Wranglers, he still felt cold, though wearing anything extra would appear suspicious and out of character (he did wear two pairs of socks though, it was easier to hide that).

Will gave himself a final look-over and sighed, mentally preparing himself for the worst, he exited his room and headed towards the kitchen where a sleepy Jonathan was buttering some toast.

## 2. Faint

### Notes for the Chapter:

thank you guys for the kudos on the first chapter, it really makes me feel like someone actually gives a damn (also to the person who left that wonderful comment, you made me cry it was so sweet <3)  
so, here is the second chapter

p.s i'm planning to update on Wednesdays because I have a really long free period that I can write in xx

Jonathan sensed Will enter the room and turned to greet him, Will paid great attention to his facial expression to see if he'd managed to get away with being frozen.

“Hey bud, we’re low on groceries so it’s just toast this morning.” Jonathan explained, continuing to spread jam over two slices of toast. Will sighed in relief and replied quickly that toast was fine, his mind wasn’t really with breakfast. The façade was easier to keep up in the mornings, the whole family was exhausted and quite delirious, Will hoped that his early shower hadn’t kept his mom and brother from sleeping. Once Will was off on his bike, he was able to stop pretending like everything was okay.

He was tired and shivering, distracted from cycling, he continuously swerved and hit his wheels on rocks that sent shocks reverberating through his body; each jolt woke him a little more, however they also built up his anxiety with anticipation of the next bump in the road. By the time he had reached Dustin’s house, Will felt incredibly uneasy and sick.

As per usual, Dustin was running late, so Will had a little while to compose himself, though he knew that he probably looked terrible. Because he spent more time around them, it was difficult to hide his emotions or states of wellness from his friends; they had been there everyday after he came back from the Upside Down and started paying even closer attention to him post-possession. The slightest change of personality or appearance would bring on a flood of

questions and attention. Getting past Mike would be the hardest. He saw as the Mindflayer consumed everything that made Will, Will. He saw the way Will hid his pain to try and make everyone's lives easier. Mike would be a challenge.

After what felt like decades, Dustin emerged from his front door and bound towards Will, spewing excuses and apologies of why he was late this time, Will laughed him off and said that it was fine. To make up for Dustin's lateness, they decided to pedal as fast as they could, which if Will was in a normal frame of mind, he would've realised was a terrible idea. Safe to say, once they had reached Mike's house on Maple Street, Will was in quite a state.

"You okay man? You're all pale..." Dustin observed once they had come to a stop. Will nodded, swallowing back nausea, everything around him was spinning alarmingly and quickly his vision began to blacken.

In an attempt to stop the inevitable, Will dismounted his bike and sat down on the curb, head between his bony knees to bring the blood back to where it needed to be. Dustin sat beside him, saying something that Will couldn't understand, he guessed it was probably concern; all he could really focus on was staying awake and not throwing up on the sidewalk. Soon, there were two more voices, which Will deduced probably belonged to Mike and Lucas; their shadowy figures were crouched in front of him, their scuffed sneakers in his line of vision. Echoing voices started to become clearer and Will could decipher what the boys were saying.

"What happened? Mike asked Dustin, tone full of worry for yet another season of terrors.

"We cycled here really fast, I think he's just tired, probably dizzy too." Dustin reasoned, Will was glad he hadn't suggested anything unusual or Upside Down related.

"I'm okay now, sorry for worrying you." Will said, lifting his head to look into the three, fearful pairs of eyes, boring into him.

"Gave us a real fright there, Byers." Lucas joked, giving him a hand to help him up, he stood slowly, not wanting to tempt fate and end



up actually passing out on them. Will smiled apologetically and went to get back onto his bike, Mike stopped him with a firm grip on his shoulder,

“You can ride on the back of mine, it’s probably best if you don’t exert yourself again, at least not this morning.” Will didn’t argue, he knew Mike was right.

The journey went by relatively quickly, though to Will it went excruciatingly slowly, he held himself steady by wrapping his arms around Mike’s sides, he felt like the cold was seeping from his hands through Mike’s shirt (which in reality was quite thick, and due to the low temperature outside, would go by completely unnoticed). Will was worried that he hadn’t warmed up at all, if anything, he felt like he was colder still, it seemed preposterous, but Will couldn’t write anything off anymore; the impossible had happened to him, so failing to rise his body temperature was quite mundane in comparison.

Still, it made Will feel nervy, the fact that cycling fast for less than half a mile was enough to nearly knock him out; he could only wonder how he’d be by the end of the day.

The boys had a double lesson of science for first and second period, so upon arriving at Hawkins’ Middle School they went straight to Mr Clarke’s room.

Scott would always let them hang out there before school, he remembered being an outcast when he had been at the Middle and High school, so anything he could do to make the boys feel less vulnerable just seemed like the right thing to do. He didn’t know everything that had gone down in ’83 and ’84, but from what he did know, Scott could hardly imagine how afraid Will must’ve been; the poor kid hardly had a good life prior to his disappearance, but now he could see the bullying had become much worse and Will had definitely lost what little confidence he may have had before.

Will loved Mr Clarke, he seemed to understand that sometimes he just couldn’t talk or do anything but stare off into the distance. They reached the classroom and Max was waiting for them outside, her red hair was glowing under the bright bar lights on the ceiling.

“What’s up, nerds?” She greeted them, feigning disgust at them, her friendly use of the term ‘nerd’ had definitely helped the boys accept their status and take pride in it; so what if they were nerds, they were also interdimensional monster killers.

“Aside from Mr William Byers nearly dying on us earlier,” Dustin joked, earning a glare from Will, “we’re pretty good!”

Max frowned at Will, she adored him and had spent a lot of time with him in the past year, after she had been dragged into the whole situation, Will felt personally responsible to causing her a great deal of lifechanging trauma, so never stopped apologising to her and making sure she felt okay and accepted; it helped Max a great deal and with more time around him, she realised how traumatised and insecure Will was, and how he was in need of emotional support. To date, Max Mayfield was the only person who knew about Will’s sexuality, something that Will was happy about, not having to keep so many secrets eased a great deal of stress.

“Are you okay?” Max asked Will after the rest of the party had proceeded into the classroom, it wasn’t unusual for them to pull each other aside from time to time, so no-one questioned it; not questioning little habits was just a new part of their bizarre lives.

“Better now, just cycled too fast, got dizzy, they’re making a way bigger deal of it than it actually was...” Will explained, only slightly hiding the truth that he was riddled with anxiety and frozen to the touch.

“Okay, if you’re sure, please take it easy today, you look too pale and your lips are a little blue... Did you bring a sweater or anything warm?” Max enquired, touching the back of her warm, freckled hands to Will’s deathly cold cheeks, she recoiled as she felt the chill, “Will you’re freezing, oh my god!” Max pulled off her red Adidas jacket and offered it to Will, who had not brought anything spare to wear.

“Max, it’s fine, I don’t want you to get cold.” Will pointlessly tried to refuse.

“Put the jacket on and go sit your skinny ass on the radiator in Mr

Clarke's room, I'm not just going to watch you catch hypothermia!" Max held Will's coat whilst he begrudgingly put on her jacket and then helped him put on his coat over the top.

"Please keep this between us, you know how Mike gets..." Will pleaded, looking guiltily to the floor, if he wasn't so screwed in the head, Max wouldn't have to be looking after his pathetic self, she'd actually be able to spend some quality time with her boyfriend.

"Fine, but you better keep that jacket on." Max agreed, and guided Will into the science room with a friendly arm around his shoulders.